ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

. . . MINUTES . . .

OF THE

. . . First Annual Session

OF THE

Colbert Baptist Association,

Held With First Baptist Church, Sheffield,

DECEMBER 4TH AND 5TH, 1896.

ALSO CONSTITUTION AND ARTICLES OF FAITH

Adopted at Its Organization.

A. J. IVIE,
Moderator.

J. Q. AYCOCK,
Clerk.

REAPER PRINT, SHEFFIELD, ALA.

MINUTES

—:OF THE:—

Colbert Baptist Association.

Pursuant to a call several churches, through their representatives, met with the First Baptist Church of Sheffield, to consider the advisability of organizing a new Association.

After the introductory sermon by Rev. J. R. Nesmith from II. Corinthians, iii, 18, Bro. W. M. Whitlock was called to the chair and Bro. J. Q. Aycock requested to act as secretary.

On motion the conference adjourned until 2 p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

On reassembling with song and prayer the following churches were enrolled:

First Baptist Church, Sheffield—R. W. Hennigan, A. J. Ivie, Ed Chitty, Rev. Mack Stamps and Murphy Hill.

Siloam—R. M. Ramsey, O. A. Grisham and John M. Whitlock.

Valley Grove—J. Q. Aycock, S. Aycock and King Gargis.

Furnace Hill—G. W. Bridges, John Gay, Jas. W. Reynold, G. W. Martin and Rev. O. E. Comstock.

Tuscumbia—Rev. A. J. Thames, A. L. Moody and W. E. Aycock.

Liberty—J. M. Roberts.

Mt. Pleasant—A. M. Carter.

Mt. Stanley— ———

Mission Grove— ———

Cherokee—W. M. Whitlock.

Riverton—W. M. Whitlock and Thomas Spencer.

The conference was then permanently organized by the election of Rev. W. M. Whitlock as chairman and Rev. O. E. Comstock as secretary.

The Chairman then appointed a Committee on Devotional Exercises consisting of the pastor, deacons and delegates of the Sheffield church.

The hour having arrived for the discussion of the question: "Is It Expedient for Us to Organize a New Association at This Time?" on motion of Bro. A. J. Ivie ten minutes were spent in prayer for guidance in its consideration.

In the absence of the appointee Bro. A. J. Ivie opened the discussion and was followed by Rev. A. J. Thames, Bro. A. L. Moody and Rev. J. R. Nesmith.

On motion the Chairman appointed the following Committee on Resolutions to report to-morrow morning: A. J. Ivie, J. M. Roberts, A. L. Moody, J. R. Nesmith and R. M. Ramsey.

The following partial report of the Devotional Committee was then received: Preaching to-night at 7:15 by Rev. W. M. Whitlock.

On motion adjourned until Saturday at 10 a. m.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION.

Conference met with song and prayer.

The report of the Committee on Resolutions was read and after discussion by Dr. Shackelford, Bros. Vincent, Nesmith, Thames and others, presenting the advantages and disadvantages of a new association the resolutions were unanimously adopted as follows:

Report of the Committee on Resolutions:

WHEREAS, It being deemed expedient by several churches in the western part of the Muscle Shoals Association and the northern part of the Big Bear Creek Association, to organize a new Association to be composed of churches within said boundaries who wish to go into said new Association; and

WHEREAS, for this purpose notices were issued to several of said churches to meet at the First Baptist Church of Sheffield to take into consideration the propriety of doing so, and

WHEREAS, said churches having met on the 4th day of December, 1896, and formed themselves into a body to discuss said propriety, and the undersigned as a committee to draft resolutions looking to said end.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, (First) That we deem it expedient to organize said Association, to be known as the Colbert Missionary Baptist Association.

RESOLVED, (Second) That the churches signed to these resolutions by their representatives do now agree to go into said organization.

RESOLVED, (Third) To solicit other churches within said boundaries to ask for letters of dismission at the next meeting of their respective Associations to unite with said new Association.

RESOLVED, (Fourth) To procure letters of dismission from their own respective Associations and to meet in said new Association on Friday before the 3rd Sunday in October, 1897.

RESOLVED, (Fifth) That we adopt the Constitution and Articles of Faith adopted by similar Associations.

Respectfully submitted. A. J. IVIE, Chairman.
J. M. ROBERTS, A. L. MOODY,
J. R. NESMITH, R. M. RAMSEY, Committee.

Signed by the following churches: Sheffield, Furnace Hill, Riverton, Cherokee, Valley Grove, Siloam and Tuscumbia.

The Committee on Devotional Exercises then reported: Preaching at First Church at 7:15 p. m. by Rev. J. M. Roberts; at Furnace Hill by J. R. Nesmith at the same hour.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Conference met with Bro. Whitlock in the chair.

After singing and prayer an organization of the new Association was perfected by electing Bro. A. J. Ivie, Moderator, and Bro. J. Q. Aycock, Clerk. With a prayer for guidance the Association proceeded to other business.

On motion the following Executive Committee was elected: W. M. Whitlock, R. M. Ramsey, A. L. Little, A. L Moody, S. Aycock.

The chair then appointed chairmen for the following committees (and they selected their associations) to report at the next meeting of the Association:

Foreign Missions—Rev. J. R. Nesmith, C. A. Womble and J. M. Hill.

Home Missions—Rev. A. J. Thames. W. E. Aycock and Ed. Chitty.

State Missions—Rev. W. M. Whitlock, J. M. Whitlock and Rev. Mack Stamps.

Temperance—J. Q. Aycock, J. R. Nesmith and A. J. Thames.

Education—Rev. Mack Stamps, A. L. Moody and J. Q. Aycock.

On motion the rules governing the Cahaba Baptist Association were adopted as rules to govern this Association.

The Committee on Time and Place of next meeting reported as follows: Tuscumbia, Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1897.

The final report of the Devotional Committee was then received: Preaching First Baptist Church, Sunday, 11 a. m., Rev. O. E. Comstock; 7:15 p. m., Rev. Joseph Shackelford. M. E. Church, Sheffield, 11 a. m., Rev. J. M. Roberts; 7:15 p. m., Rev. Mack Stamps. C. P. Church, 11 a. m., Rev. A. J. Thames. Furnace Hill Baptist Church, 11 a. m., Rev. W. M. Whitlock; 7:15 p. m., Rev. J. M. Roberts; Tuscumbia Baptist Church, 11 a. m., Dr. Shackelford. M. E. Church, Tuscumbia, 11 a. m., Rev. J. R. Nesmith.

On motion the Association adjourned to meet with Tuscumbia Baptist Church, Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1897.

J. Q. Aycock, Clerk. A. J. Ivie, Moderator.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Adopted by the Colbert Baptist Association at Its Organization

December 4th, 1896.

I. Of the Scriptures—We believe the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

II. Of the True God.—That there is one, and only one, true and living God, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love, revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. Of the Fall of Man.—That man was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice, being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, wholly given to the gratification of the world, of Satan, and of their own sinful passions, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse.

IV. Of the Way of Salvation.—That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who took upon him our nature, yet without sin, honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by His death. Being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and, uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

V. Of Justification.—That the great gospel blessing which Christ of his fullness bestows on such as believe in him, is justification; that justification consists in the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we may have done, but solely through his own redemption and righteousness; that it brings us in a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every blessing for time and eternity.

VI. Of Freeness of Salvation.—That the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty

of all to accept them by faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ; which refusal will submit him to an aggravated condemnation.

VII. Of Grace in Regeneration—That in order to be saved, we must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

VIII. Of God's Purpose of Grace.—That election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he originates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it is ascertained by its effects in all who believe the gospel; is the foundation of Christian assurances; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves, demands and deserves our utmost diligence.

IX. Of the Perseverance of Saints.—That such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith and salvation.

X. Harmony of the Law and Gospel.—That the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability, which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen man, to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin, to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

XI. Of a Gospel Church.—That a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptised believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only proper officers are bishops, or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles of Timothy and Titus.

XII. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.—That Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its purifying power; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's supper, in which the members of the church

by the use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.

XIII. Of the Christian Sabbath.—That the first day of the week is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor and recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

XIV. Of Civil Government.—That civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

XV. Of the Righteous and the Wicked.—That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem, while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief, are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

XVI. Of the World to Come.—That the end of the world is approaching, and that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from their graves to final retribution; that a solemn separation will take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of man in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

CONSTITUTION

Adopted by the Colbert Baptist Association at Its Organization,

December 4th, 1896.

Article 1. The Association shall be composed of members chosen by the different churches in our union, who, on producing their credentials, shall be entitled to seats.

Article 2. The members thus chosen and convened shall be known by the name of the Colbert Baptist Association, who shall usurp no authority over the churches in our union, or infringe upon their internal rights, but shall merely be considered as an advisory council in all the matters relative to their internal concerns. Nevertheless it becomes necessary, in some cases, to have uniform ruless of procedure; for example, if one church commit an offense against another, it shall be the duty of the offended to labor with the offender

for satisfaction; if she fail of success she shall call the aid of two or more churches in our union to assist in laboring for satisfaction; and if final satisfaction, in the opinion of the helps thus called, be not obtained, the agrieved may bring the case before the Association, which shall be taken up and decided upon according to its merits. If a serious difference shall arise in an individual church, which, upon due labor cannot be reconciled, she shall call the aid of two or more sister churches to assist in the work; and if a reconciliation be not affected, the helps so called, or the church, may bring the case before the Association, to be acted upon according to its merits. But the Association will take cognizance of no case of the above kind unless a due course of procedure shall have been previously pursued according to the economy of church discipline, found in the 10th chapter of the gospel of Matthew, and other parts of the Scriptures which define the nature of offences and manner of bringing offenders to trial.

ARTICLE 3. The churches in our union shall transmit to every annual session of the Association, written communications, specifying the names of their messengers, their number in fellowship, baptized, received by letter, dismissed, excommunicated, restored, and deceased since the last session, which shall be read and minuted accordingly.

ARTICLE 4. Every church in our union shall be entitled to representation in the following manner, viz. Churches composed of fifty members, or under, are entitled to send three messengers, and for every fifty members that may be added, one additional messenger. Any church failing to represent herself as above prescribed, shall state the reason to the next session.

ARTICLE 5. New churches may be admitted into our union by messengers bearing petitionary letters. If, upon examination, they be found worthy and orthodox, the Moderator shall manifest their admission by giving the messengers the right hand in token of Christian fellowship.

ARTICLE 6. The Association, when convened, shall be governed by a regular and proper decorum, which it is authorized to form and amend according to her own views.

ARTICLE 7. At every session of the Association, a Moderator shall be appointed by and from among the messengers present, whose duty it shall be to see that the rules of decorum are strictly observed, and to take the voice of the Association on all subjects legally introduced. A Clerk shall also be appointed, whose duty it shall be to take proper and correct minutes of the proceedings.

ARTICLE 8. The Association shall have power to exclude from her union any church that may violate the constitution, or depart from the orthodox principles of the gospel.

ARTICLE 9. The Association shall furnish the churches with the Minutes of every session.

ARTICLE 10. Every query sent by a particular church must be included in her letter, certifying that she has endeavored to reconcile it but failed. In such a case the Association shall take it under consideration, and the voice of a majority shall be considered an advisory answer, which shall be entered upon the minutes.

ARTICLE 11. Queries which immediately concern the general union of the churches sent by a particular church, or introduced by motion, shall be taken up and declared on as soon as practicable.

ARTICLE 12. Any church in our union having a member who is judged to possess talents for the ministry, shall call from two or more churches the aid of their ministers, and select members of the laity, who, in conjunction with the churches, shall examine the candidate, and, if deemed qualified, may license him to preach the gospel among the churches at discretion, which shall be reported to the next Association and entered upon the Minutes.

ARTICLE 13. Any church in our union having a preacher whom she deems worthy of ordination, shall call a presbytery of ministers from sister churches to officiate in the work, and all the presbyteries in ordaining of ministers or deacons, or in the constituting of churches, shall be governed by the abstract of faith adopted by this Association.

ARTICLE 14. Any church in our union having a minister who may fall into disorder, and who, after all due labor with him, shall continue refractory, should consider him a fit subject for excommunication, shall have power to exclude him from fellowship; and it shall be the duty of that church, in such a case, to call a presbytery and through them demand his credentials. If such a minister return and give satisfaction, the church shall have power to restore him to fellowship as a private member; but if she wish him restored to the exercise of his ministerial functions, she shall again call a presbytery who shall be discretionally authorized to renew his credentials; which, if renewed, shall be reported at the next meeting of the Association and entered upon the Minutes.

ARTICLE 15. The Association shall have a fund, supplied by the voluntary contributions of the churches, and all moneys thus contributed shall be transmitted from the churches by their messengers and paid over to the Committee of Finance. This committee shall be appointed annually, whose duty it shall be to receive in charge the Association fund, and dispose of the same agreeably to the order. They shall make at every session a fair and circumstantial report of their proceedings.

ARTICLE 16. It shall be the duty of the Clerk of this Association to keep a regular file of the printed minutes of every session of this body.

ARTICLE 17. The Association shall not adjourn any session until it shall have finished all business on hand, except in extraordinary cases.

ARTICLE 18. The Minutes of the Association shall be read and corrected, if necessary, and signed by the Moderator and Clerk, before the session rises.

ARTICLE 19. The Association shall, in all cases, be governed by a majority of the members present.

ARTICLE 20. Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any session of this Association, where a majority of the members shall decide it necessary.